

# Natural Resources Review

ISSUE 12  
Summer 2012

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

**OUR MISSION:** To improve the quality of life for all Kentuckians by protecting our land, air, and water resources; utilizing our natural resources in an environmentally conscientious manner; and creating efficient environmentally responsible ways of managing, conserving and sustaining our resources for future generations.



Photo: J. Hamon  
Aerial photo taken this  
summer in Ohio County.  
He calls it "Wetlands in  
bloom".





## Commissioner's Corner

By Steve Hohmann, Commissioner  
Department for Natural Resources

Colleagues,

It is summer and the number of significant accomplishments made by the Department this year has made me very proud. Construction season is underway at the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (DAML) and reclamation activities are bringing the old pre-law abandoned mine sites closer to where they are no longer a threat to human health or safety. I look forward to a future when the business of reclaiming these pre-law sites is diminished and the federally funded program is no longer needed in the Commonwealth. Also at AML, important waterline projects are underway. To date, 34,033 Kentucky residents have municipal water as a result of this critical program. Some of our state's most remote locations have been served by this program and the inhabitants provided a stable source of safe potable water.

The other divisions have been busy making headway in their respective areas as well. The Division of Forestry, dealing with the devastating tornado damage to the Morgan County Nursery, has continued to move forward with cleanup and developing their plans for the restoration of the damaged facilities. Fire season was successfully culminated due in large part to the selfless determination and conduct of the men and women who courageously fought the many spring forest fires.

Despite deep budget cuts this fiscal year, division management and employees are managing to fulfill their regulatory responsibilities, albeit in a much more difficult environment. This has been very encouraging but I'm acutely aware of the strain this is causing on the employees in each of our programs. Unfortunately, we are approaching FY 13 where further budget reductions are expected. While most areas of state government are feeling the same budgetary pinch, it has become necessary for the Department to make some adjustments in the way we do business. We will make every effort to implement any required changes in a manner that will limit the negative impacts on employees and efficiently utilize the resources we are provided.

While this upcoming fiscal year will be challenging from several points of view, I am confident in our ability to overcome any hardship that may be forthcoming. I sincerely thank each of you for your dedication and diligence in the conduct of your assigned duties.

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## Big Rivers Wildlife Management Area and State Forest Dedicated in Union County

By Lynn True

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) and the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) recently held a dedication for the newly minted Big Rivers Wildlife Management Area and State Forest located in Union County. The property covers 2,488 acres along the Tradewater River and the Ohio River near Sturgis. Purchase of the property – known locally as the Alcoa property, or more recently as the Kimball property – was possible only through the cooperation of private, public and non-profit agencies.

The property will provide public recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing and other activities as a wildlife management area. The property will also be managed to provide watershed and water quality protection; protection and recovery of endangered, threatened, and rare species; preservation of existing cultural and geological treasures - and a sustainable forest. It will be permanently protected from development and agricultural conversion.

KDFWR and KDF assembled \$6,681,780 (including administrative fees) to purchase the tract. Kentucky's congressional delegation helped secure \$3.25 million in federal money through the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program (FLP), the most significant share of the project, while the necessary non-federal matching funds were supplied from a variety of sources.

The Nature Conservancy, one of the nation's largest environmental non-profits, assisted in obtaining funds from Duke Energy (\$1.75 million) and the Crounse Corporation (\$50,000). Additionally, KDF utilized \$1 million of its Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Funds – funds derived from nature license plate sales, environmental fines and a portion of the unmined minerals tax.

"The Division of Forestry is very excited about this new wildlife management area and state forest," said KDF Director Leah MacSwords. "This joint venture conserves a valuable forest ecosystem and showcases the importance of a well-managed forest."

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Dr. Jon Gassett said the acquisition is an example of groups working together to benefit the public. "We have partnered closely with The Conservation Fund almost a quarter-century to help secure lands in Kentucky for public outdoor recreation," he said. "They have protected nearly seven million acres across the country, and they were instrumental in helping us protect such Kentucky lands that are now Peabody, Obion, and Sloughs WMAs."

The property will be jointly managed as a wildlife management area and state forest. State forests properties use the ecosystem management approach to ensure biological diversity and sustainable use. Like the other state-owned forests, Big Rivers will be a working forest with demonstration areas to promote good forestry practices.



The Big Rivers site provides great value to the Commonwealth, providing the public recreational opportunities and preserving this wildlife management area.



## Breathitt County Residents of Copeland, Duck Hollow, and River Caney to Receive Access to Potable Water Supply

Thanks to a \$1.75 million Memorandum of Agreement between the Breathitt County Water District and the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands, residents in these areas will soon be receiving potable water. Groundwater studies requested by Breathitt County officials and conducted by the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) found that the well water used in these areas was significantly degraded by mining that occurred prior to 1982. AML may fund waterline projects using their federal grant if the problems addressed are caused by mining prior to May of 1982.

Approximately 103 homes in these areas will now have access to a safe and constant supply of water. G & W Construction of Morehead, will be installing over 10 miles of various sizes of waterlines, including pumps and valves, with a low bid of \$959,383.30. American Structures of Menemorie, Wisconsin will install a 31,000 gallon storage tank for a low bid of \$146,158. Design and construction inspection services are provided by Nesbitt Engineering. A groundbreaking ceremony was held at the Watts Fire Department building along KY Route 15 on Tuesday May 29.



In attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony from left to right are: Estill McIntosh, BCWD superintendent, Kash Noble, BCWD board member, Paul Nesbitt, Nesbitt Engineering, Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Combs, Copeland residents, Brenda Fugate, Breathitt County deputy judge, Ray Moore, Breathitt County magistrate, and Mark Meade, assistant director KY AML.

## Conservation Districts Offer Environmental Education Scholarships

By Pam Williams

Many conservation districts in Kentucky offer college, continuing education and environmental camp scholarships. These scholarships provide opportunities for districts to promote conservation through higher education in agriculture or natural resource areas and the means for younger students to participate in environmental education camps. Most districts do not have the capability to fund a student's full college tuition, and with the current economic situation every dollar directed toward higher education becomes important to recipients in acquiring their degree. The funds awarded by districts in these areas enable students to further their educational goals and the ability to participate in hands-on environmental education projects. Without these funds, some course studies may be significantly reduced or unattainable by high tuition costs, expense of living on campus, cost of class materials, books and registration fees.

The Mary Chandler Memorial Scholarship sponsored by the Lawrence County Conservation District has enabled 10 students in Lawrence County to further their education in the fields of natural resources or agriculture.

The district began awarding the \$1,000 scholarship in June, 2002 in an effort to continue Ms. Chandler's lifelong goal of promoting conservation through higher education. Ms. Chandler was an educator, the first woman to receive the statewide forestry award and former member of the Lawrence County Conservation District Board. To date, the scholarship program has awarded \$10,000 in their effort to honor Ms. Chandler's goal and promote conservation education in Lawrence County by helping students achieve their educational goals in either an agriculture or natural resource area.



## Fire Management Chief Named by Division of Forestry

By Lynn True

Luke Saunier has been named fire management chief for the Kentucky Division of Forestry (Fire Department No. 994), moving up from a position as forest ranger technician III in the Bluegrass District. Saunier has previous experience in the military and brings wildfire and law enforcement experience to the position.

“As the division’s fire chief, Saunier will be responsible for the overall leadership and program direction for wildland fire management in Kentucky,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Division of Forestry. “The position requires firsthand knowledge of fire science, an understanding of the complexities of the Incident Command System, and the ability to manage grant funding for programs ranging from equipping volunteer fire departments to providing fire mitigation to communities.”

Saunier has a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry from the University of Kentucky and will receive a Master of Science degree in criminal justice and emergency management this fall.

Saunier is a veteran of the U. S. Army and served in Iraq as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom II. He has been with the Division of Forestry as a forest ranger technician since 2007.



Luke Saunier, right, trains with Bluegrass District Forest Ranger Technician Matt Haywood.

## Division of Mine Permits Accepts Donations for Tornado Victims

DMP gathers household items in effort to help those in need

By Danita Lasage

On March 2, 2012, dozens of tornadoes ripped through parts of Kentucky and West Virginia. One twister, rated EF-3 on the Enhanced Fujita scale, plowed an 86-mile path that included West Liberty, (pop. about 3500). Six persons were killed in the small Morgan County city, and at least 75 were injured. The downtown area was so severely damaged that police had to close it off.

When she heard the news of the disaster, Pam Spaulding, an environmental enforcement specialist with the Division of Mine Permits, was one of many Kentuckians moved to act on behalf of the victims.

Pam attends Capital City Christian Church, which was conducting a church-wide drive to collect non-perishable goods for the devastated area. She realized that collecting goods was the best way she and her friends could aid in the recovery effort.

Inspired by her church’s plan, Pam obtained permission to conduct a similar drive at DMP, where she has worked for 23 years. She then appealed to her co-workers to join her in her efforts to collect items to deliver to the residents of the devastated community.

DMP employees brought in the requested items to deposit in strategically placed boxes. After two weeks, Pam consolidated the material and delivered it to the church, which passed the goods on to their contacts in West Liberty. Items included laundry detergent, shampoo, toothpaste, and other badly needed items.



# OMSL Mine Rescue Teams Compete

By Ronnie Drake

The Federal Mining Act sets out requirements for mine rescue coverage at the nation's coal mines. Each coal mine is required to provide coverage from two mine rescue teams. At mines with more than 36 employees, one of the teams must be a mine site team or a composite team made up of two miners from each represented mine. The second team can be a contract team or a state sponsored team. Mines with less than 36 employees may use state sponsored teams or composite teams as both of their mandated teams. Kentucky is the only state that provides this service, and covers basically all of the mines in the Commonwealth with either one or two teams.

Training requirements for mine rescue teams are also mandated in the Miner Act and requires extensive training including team visits (training sessions). These visits must take place, once or twice per team per year, depending on the size of the mine. Another requirement for certification of the signatory teams is that each team must compete in two mine rescue contest annually. These contests must conform to the National Mine Rescue Rules, and be judged by MSHA qualified judges. Each contest must have at least three teams competing and have a declared winner.

To comply with this requirement OMSL competes annually in a contest held exclusively for the 12 teams from our six inspection districts. Agency teams are comprised of full time safety professionals (mine inspectors, analysts and instructors) from each of the districts. The competition was held at Jenny Wiley State Park in Prestonsburg on April 25 and April 26. On the second day of competition the teams worked in a steady rain to make their task even more challenging. The team members were appreciative of Executive Director Freddie Lewis and Commissioner Steve Hohman attending the contest.

Competition began at 7 a.m. each day with the teams being placed in isolation. A team member was selected to take a written exam to test their mine rescue knowledge.



Overall winner: Madisonville #1 poses after the contest with Commissioner Steve Hohmann and Executive Director Freddie Lewis

Judges were assigned to their field and briefed on that day's simulated disaster. Beginning at 8 a.m. each day, the teams worked to solve the simulated disaster, account for all missing miners, and bring survivors to the surface, all while wearing an approved four-hour breathing apparatus to supply oxygen in an irrespirable atmosphere. During the competition on the first day all teams had to deal with a mine fire, high explosive gas readings, low oxygen readings and smoke before rescuing missing miners. On the second day teams dealt with another fire situation, smoke, blackdamp, high methane gas readings, and caved-in areas before restoring ventilation to rescue the survivors. The average working time for each problem was 54 minutes.

## WINNERS DAY-1

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE- MADISONVILLE No.1, 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE- MARTIN No.1, 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE- MARTIN No.2 TEAM

## WINNERS DAY- 2

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE- HAZARD No.1 TEAM, 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE- BARBOURVILLE No.1 TEAM, 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE- MADISONVILLE No.2 TEAM

## OVERALL WINNER 2 DAY CUMULATIVE SCORE

MADISONVILLE No.1 TEAM

## Division of Mine Permits GIS Section Deploys the Trimble Yuma

By Jeffrey Laird

The GIS section at the Department for Natural Resources, Division of Mine Permits used some grant money to purchase a field-hardened Trimble Yuma tablet computer equipped with fore and aft cameras, video, and a  $\pm 5$  meter GPS. Unlike a handheld device like a Garmin or Magellan unit, the Yuma runs the full version of Windows 7 with a docking station, monitor and keyboard, and can perform as a workstation in the office. Since it has a complete operating system, we were able to load ArcGIS 10 and Google Earth onto it so as to take a full version GIS into the field. Using AT&T and Appalachian Wireless air cards, we are able to access the Internet and attach Bing maps and other Web data to ArcMap projects as needed.

In April, we field-tested the Yuma in Martin County for use in a water quality sampling project. The 30,000-acre watershed was originally set up to have six sampling points established from aerial photography prior to visiting the site. Using multiple layers (including clipped roads, hydrology, mine permit boundaries, and oil and gas wells) as well as a shapefile created for the sampling station points, we created an ArcMap project on the YUMA.

Some of the points in the project area are so remote that the access roads visible on aerial photography are not mapped on the DOT layers. There are no landmarks, bridges, cross-streets or other ways to describe the point locations, other than lat/longs, requiring us to rely heavily on the Yuma's GPS to recover the locations.



Kevin Devine and Jeff Laird demonstrate the new equipment purchased through grant money allocated to the Division of Permits.

The Yuma GPS was used to navigate to the points selected from the aerial photography. Several of the preselected points turned out to be unsuitable due to access issues such as bank steepness, so we added new points while in the field. In all, we mapped 10 permanent sample locations plus several temporary “dip” locations. With Yuma, we were able to open the point location layer for edit, add points directly from the GPS, and attribute the points using the pop-up keyboard and a stylus. We also took geo-tagged pictures and a short video of each of the sampling sites, and logged their coordinates. Back in Frankfort, we downloaded the edited shapefiles using a stick drive and loaded them onto the server to start making maps and building applications.

Overall, the Yuma performed well for this project and for a later demonstration at the EEC GIS Applications Development meeting on May 16. Visit the EEC GIS SharePoint site for details. For more info on the Trimble Yuma go to <http://www.trimble.com/Outdoor-Rugged-Computers/yuma.aspx?dtID=features>.



## **“Celebrating Kentucky’s Forests” Theme for Earth Day and Arbor Day**

By Lynn True

Arbor Day, first celebrated in Nebraska in 1872, is observed on the first Friday in April in Kentucky. The day is set aside to recognize the importance of trees in our lives, to promote the planting of trees and to educate people on how to care for trees. This year, Kentucky recognized Arbor Day as well as Earth Day with a tree planting event held in Frankfort. The event was held prior to the Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission’s (EQC) Earth Day Ceremony. As a special tribute to the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) for 100 years of service, EQC presented an Earth Day Award to KDF for significant contributions made to the environment since the agency was established in 1912.



EQC Chair Scott Smith, Division of Forestry Director Leah MacSwords and Secretary Leonard Peters, Energy and Environment Cabinet at the EQC Earth Day Ceremony.

## **Wildland Fire Academy Contributes to Fallen Firefighters Memorials**

By Lynn True

The Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy (a collaboration of state and federal resource agencies including the Kentucky Division of Forestry) recently made a donation to the Kentucky, Tennessee and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial foundations. Each of the foundations received a \$250 donation to help maintain their memorials. Kentucky’s donation was made at the Kentucky Fallen Firefighter’s Memorial located at Juniper Hills Park off U.S. Highway 127 in Frankfort.

“The Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy conducts fire training ranging from basic wildland firefighting skills and air operations to courses for fire line supervisors and incident commanders,” said Mike Harp, fire program specialist for the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Since 2010, the academy has raised funds during annual trainings to help with the upkeep of the fallen firefighter memorials. The Kentucky Fallen Firefighter Memorial was erected Oct. 11, 1999, and includes more than 200 names of firefighters who have died in the line of duty.



Mike Harp, fire management program specialist for the Kentucky Division of Forestry, presented the donation to Ronnie Day, executive director of the Kentucky Fire Commission in front of the Kentucky Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial. Pictured left to right: Bruce Roberts and Ronnie Day, Kentucky Fire Commission, Mike Harp, Kentucky Division of Forestry and Van Taylor, Kentucky Fire Fighters Association.



## Division of Conservation Partners with Agencies to Further Boys' Goals

West Liberty Service Center Hosts Boy Scout Troop 109

By Pam Williams

On February 17 the Morgan County USDA Service Center hosted Boy Scout Troop 109 from West Liberty. These seven young men were in pursuit of their Citizenship in the Nation badge. This badge requires the troop to understand the history of our nation, participate in activities that support responsible active citizenship within their communities, knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in the legislative process, and the importance of protecting and defending our nation and individual rights.

Troop Leader Danny McKenzie said, "With the community support this troop has received and the commitment these boys have put forth participating in activities that will provide them with skills and knowledge that promote excellent citizenship, they have a bright future."

The Morgan County Service Center agencies include USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, Morgan County Conservation District and Division of Conservation. Each agency provided an overview of their legislative enactment, community services provided by each agency, the importance of being good stewards of our land and the many career opportunities that one could pursue as a federal, state or county employee. The service center agency personnel were honored to assist the young men with their personal development in achieving their goals.

The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness.

As Scouts fulfill the requirements for this merit badge, they will learn how to become active citizens; become aware of and grateful for their liberties and rights; participate in their governments and protect their freedom; help defend their country; and stand up for individual rights on behalf of all citizens.



The requirements include several tasks that educate and prompt the boys to learn many aspects of government and American history. The young men are instructed to complete the following:

- Explain what citizenship in the nation means.
- Visit a place that is listed on the National Historic register and report what you learned.
- Tour your state capitol building and report what you learned to your counselor.
- Watch the national evening news or read a newspaper five days in a row and discuss the issues.
- Discuss each of the following documents with your counselor. Tell your counselor how you feel life in the United States might be different without each one.

Declaration of Independence  
Preamble to the Constitution  
The Constitution  
Bill of Rights  
Amendments to the Constitution

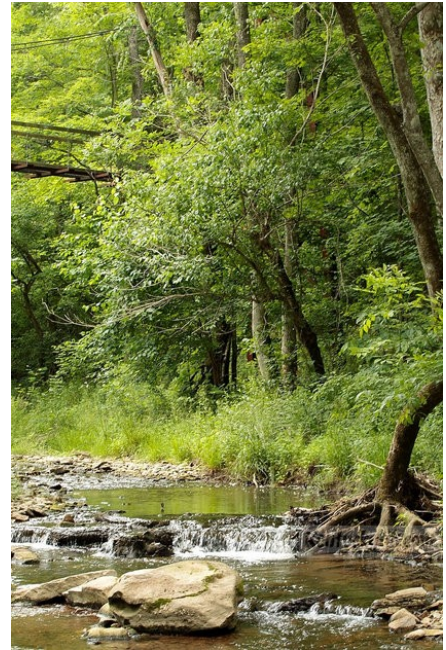
- List and discuss the six functions of government as noted in the preamble to the Constitution.
- Name the three branches of our federal government and explain to your counselor their functions.
- Name your two senators and the member of Congress from your congressional district. Write a letter about a national issue and send it to one of these elected officials, sharing your view with him or her.

## Man Wills \$500,000 to Historic Preserve in Clark County

A central Kentucky man has left \$500,000 in his will to the Lower Howard's Creek Nature and Heritage Preserve which has long ties to his family. Richard S. "Dick" Shely Jr., who died in Clark County in August, bequeathed the funds to the Clark County Community Foundation to be used strictly to benefit Lower Howard's Creek. Shely's great-grandfather, Hubbard L. Stevens, was the last owner and operator of the Jonathan Bush Mill which is located in the valley of the preserve, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Community Foundation was created in December 1998 by the Clark County Fiscal Court and a group of local citizens as an affiliate of the Blue Grass Community Foundation.

The Clark County Community Foundation raises and distributes its money locally, and each donation is used in accordance with the wishes of the donor. Most of the funds are endowed which means the principle that's invested stays in there in perpetuity.

Zeb Weese of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) says, "The KHLCF Board has funded the purchase of almost 400 acres of Clark County's Lower Howard's Creek to protect several rare species and create public hiking trails. As the recipient of the 2011 KHLCF Stewardship Award, I know that Lower Howard's will put the \$500,000 donated by Richard Shely to excellent use managing this important natural area for future generations to enjoy."



Lower Howard's Creek Nature and Heritage Preserve in Clark County will use the perpetual funds to manage the land used to protect species and provide recreational opportunities to the community.

## Ellison Honored As Outstanding Conservation District Board Member of the Year

By Johnna McHugh

Dan Ellison from Graves County is the current National Conservation District Employees Association's (NCDEA) Outstanding Conservation District Board Member of the Year. He was presented this award at the 2012 NCDEA annual conference earlier this year.

Ellison has served for 20 years as a Graves County Conservation District board member. As a local conservation leader, Ellison has served on numerous local boards to represent the district and has served as both chairman and vice chairman for his local district board. He works closely with local elected officials and is active with local colleges, businesses and industry.

Ellison continues to support and encourage the district employees association in their meetings and training workshops. Ellison has served as an area state director to the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts and is currently serving as the association's vice president. He is active on various committees and state association sponsored events such as the annual legislative dinner, state conventions and workshops, and the annual legislative trip to Washington, D.C. Ellison recently completed service as vice president of the state Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) and as regional vice president for RC&D.



Dan Ellison with Connie Richmeier, president of the National Conservation District Employees Association, and Karen Woodrich, state conservationist.



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Photo by  
J. Hamon